

Parientes

By José Antonio Esquibel

Founders of the Villa de Santa Fe #4 The Olguín Family

The full surname of the Olguín family was originally López Holguín, which was shortened to Holguín in the early 1700s and then changed to Olguín by the mid to late 1700s. The origins of this family can be traced to the small farming and livestock-raising village of Fuente Ovejuna located 58 miles northwest of the city of Córdoba in the arid *meseta* (highland plateau) of Andalucía, Spain.

On Feb. 9, 1559, the progenitor of the Olguín family of New Mexico, Juan López Holguín, son of Juan López Villasana and Isabel Ruiz, received the sacrament of baptism in the Church of Nuestra Señora del Castillo at Fuente Ovejuna shortly after his birth.

The climate and terrain in the area of Fuente Ovejuna bears a remarkable resemblance to that of northern New Mexico. Instead of *piñón* and juniper trees, Iberian holm, cork oak and olive trees dot the surrounding landscape with the blue-shaded mountains of the Sierra Morena prominently visible on the northern horizon..

Fuente Ovejuna and its normally peaceful residents achieved notoriety in 1476 when several people conspired to kill the knight-commander of the castle because of his injustices. When the murder was investigated, the residents gave the same information, saying that "Fuente Ovejuna [an alternate spelling] did it."

About 1613, the famed Spanish playwright Lope de Vega wrote a play about this infamous incident titled *Fuente Ovejuna*. He offers a description of the residents of the town in these lines:

*Commander: Of soldiers I have few; my servants, though,
Will fight like lions if you command.
In Fuente Ovejuna we have folk
Who are but humble farmers, and more skilled
In agriculture than in arts of war.*

Sometime before 1593, Juan López Holguín, who also went by the name of Juan López Villasana, traveled to the bustling city of Sevilla, where he obtained the necessary license that allowed him to seek passage on a ship bound for New Spain. He was apparently not satisfied with the prospect of living his life as a farmer.

He married Catalina de Villanueva and they were residing in the parish of Santa Vera Cruz in Mexico City when their daughter, María Ortiz, received the sacrament of baptism on April 2, 1594. Their second known daughter, Ana Ortiz, was also most likely born in Mexico City.



Manuel Olguín, (1886-1957), married to María Gertrudes Torres, son of Manuel de Jesús Olguín and María Encarnación Márquez. Photo courtesy of Ruby Olguín of Albuquerque.

drawn from those of paternal grandmothers and maternal grandparents, as well as given names of siblings and parents. One of the daughters of Cristóbal Baca and Ana Ortiz went by the name of María de Villanueva, and Catalina de Villanueva's second daughter may very well have been a namesake of the elder Ana Ortiz.

The turning point in the historical legacy of the López Holguín family came in the summer of 1599 when word spread across Mexico City that the viceroy of New Spain sought volunteers to go to the distant frontier of La Nueva México in response to Juan de Oñate's request for reinforcements to maintain the recently established Spanish colony. Already, by September 1599, several of Oñate's captains were in Mexico City to assist with enlisting prospective recruits.

If Juan López Holguín and his small, young family had remained in Mexico City, they would have struggled in the attempt to make any mark of distinction among thousands of other families. Instead, he and Catalina de Villanueva elected to step forward as prospective settlers of New Mexico. Whatever else motivated this family, service to God and king in the frontier promised special social privileges associated with the much-coveted title of *hidalgo*.

Juan López Holguín and Cristóbal Baca enlisted with their families as settlers of New Mexico under the command of Capt. Gaspar de Villagrà, the future literary poet-author of *Historia de la Nueva México*, joining as many as 63 other recruits, consisting of single men as well as families. Baca received the military commission of captain while López Holguín received that of sergeant, serving under Baca.

These two families left behind a measure of certainty in their daily routines, as well familiarity and security in their surroundings, in exchange for the unknown and unexpected. Any anticipation of promise and benefits from serving the king also included the knowledge of the inherent risk and danger they would encounter in the frontier. The determination of the López Holguín family to endure almost any obstacle to reach New Mexico remained resolute.

By October 1599, the expedition of reinforcements reached the frontier outpost of Santa Bárbara in the Valle de San Bartolomé, today known as Valle de Allende in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Delays prevented the group from continuing the journey. On Aug. 26, 1600, Juan López Holguín presented himself for a general inspection and muster of soldiers. Giving his name as Juan López Villasana and his rank as sergeant, he named his wife and two daughters, declaring he had in his possession 10 cavalry horses, a *harquebus* (a muzzle-loaded firearm), his coat of mail and *cuisse*, and armor for his horse. In addition he declared three suits of clothes for himself and three suits of clothes for his wife and daughters. Other less-valuable items were not specifically claimed. The fact that he signed his statement indicates at least a rudimentary level of education on his part.

The company of about 80 people departed for New Mexico on Sept. 4, 1600. These hardy adventurers managed to overcome the challenges of the journey, passing through El Paso del Río del Norte and traveling alongside the Río Grande to arrive on Christmas Eve in December 1600 at the settlement of San Gabriel del Yunque, near the Pueblo of Oque Owingeh.

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It appears that Catalina de Villanueva was a close relative, perhaps a sister, of Ana Ortiz, the wife of Cristóbal Baca, the progenitors of the Baca family of New Mexico. Spanish families often used a variety of surnames

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The soldiers and families of the Spanish colony in New Mexico experienced many hardships. Over the course of the next several years, the expectations of making any significant discoveries of gold or encountering Indian communities as advanced as that of the Mexica of Tenochtitlán gradually diminished. By 1608 there were only about 50 Spanish soldiers left in New Mexico of the estimated 248 soldiers that came between 1598 and 1601. The López Holguín family ranked among the steadfast settlers.

One clue to understanding the reason the López Holguín and Baca families remained in New Mexico is the fact that they were active supporters of the Franciscan friars. In December 1604, a petition mentioned that Juan López Holguín received the commission to deliver dispatches to Fray Juan de Escalona at the Pueblo of San Felipe. In later years, Cristóbal Baca served as the syndic of the Franciscans, meaning he managed financial and commercial affairs on behalf of the Franciscans. In fact, the López Holguín and Baca families formed part of the core pro-Franciscan political faction in opposition to the authority of various governors of New Mexico.

Archival documents indicate that a military camp or garrison most likely occupied the site of the Villa de Santa Fe as early as 1604. With the arrival of Gov. Pedro de Peralta in December 1609, efforts were made to select a suitable site for the *villa* as ordered by the viceroy of New Spain. It appears that the soldiers of the garrison advocated for bestowing the legal status of *villa* upon the military camp, and thus the Villa de Santa Fe came into existence as a legally recognized municipality in 1610. Among the known original settlers of the villa were Juan López Holguín and his wife, Catalina de Villanueva, who appear to have lived at Santa Fe since 1607.

The construction of the church and *convento*, as well as the royal and municipal government buildings, required labor that was found among the Pueblo Indians because the Spanish population of New Mexico consisted of only 50 soldiers, most with families. In fact, some of these soldiers requested permission from Gov. Peralta to leave New Mexico but were denied the request due to the danger it would cause for the few remaining Spanish residents. In September 1612, Fray Isidro Ordóñez attempted to override the governor's decisions, resulting in a political conflict that slowed the development of the Villa de Santa Fe.

Ordóñez criticized the governor for poor working conditions and noted that some of the Pueblo Indians traveled "12, 14 and as much as 20 leagues" to work in the *villa*. By February 1613, the Franciscans managed to curtail the use of Indian labor.

How much work was done by Pueblo Indians in the construction of the various buildings and houses of the Villa de Santa Fe between early 1610 and the end of 1612 is not known from surviving documents. It is known that the first church collapsed by 1626 and, according to Fray Alonso de Benavides, it was the residents of the *villa*, including women and children, who worked on building a new church.

Around 1620 the town council of the Villa de Santa Fe sought permission to relocate the settlement to a more defensible site. The viceroy of New Spain denied the request and instead ordered that necessary supplies be sent for repairing the church and the *casas reales*, today known as the Palace of the Governors, and for constructing defensive structures. The viceroy specifically ordered that the boundaries of the *villa* be squared, including the construction of four *cubos*, towers with battlements, for protection from raids by various bands of Apaches.

There were now 48 Spanish soldiers in New Mexico, most with



Olguin family of early 1900s. Front row left to right: Ricardo Olguin, Gertrudes Torres Olguin, María Encarnación Olguin; back row left to right: Adolfo Olguin, Manuel Olguin, Fidel Olguin, María Cruzita Olguin, Ray Olguin. Photo courtesy of Ruby Olguin of Albuquerque.

families, but not all of these families lived in Santa Fe. Some lived in the vicinity of the pueblos of Santa Clara and San Juan, while others acquired land in the Río Abajo in the vicinity of Sandía Pueblo. The López Holguín family and their in-laws received grants of land in the Río Abajo, where future generations of the family chose to live.

The last known written account of Juan López Holguín is from May 1626 in which he was referred to as a *vecino y primero fundador* of the Villa de Santa Fe, a taxpaying citizen and first founder. His wife now went by Doña Catalina, indicating that this family managed to acquire the social privileges of the *hidalgo* class of Spanish society, including the privilege of using the social honorifics of *don* and *doña*.

In addition to their two daughters, María Ortiz and Ana Ortiz, Juan López Olguin and his wife were the parents of

at least two other children, who were apparently born in New Mexico: Isabel Holguín and Cristóbal Holguín, through whom the Olguin surname passed on to future generations. Curiously, in the 1690s Cristóbal was said to have been a natural son of Juan, suggesting that his mother was an unnamed woman.

María Ortiz married Simón de Abendaño, a soldier and a native of Spain. This couple, both deceased by 1622, had a daughter named María de Abendaño. Doña Isabel Holguín and her brother, Cristóbal, both married into the Carvajal family, another family that supported the Franciscans politically.

Cristóbal Holguín, a native of the Villa de Santa Fe born circa 1607, eventually made his residence in the Isleta jurisdiction and his sister, Doña Isabel, lived with her husband and family in the Sandía jurisdiction. Cristóbal was the father of Salvador Holguín (b.ca. 1639) and apparently also of Ana Holguín, the wife of Capt. Pedro Varela de Losada.

Salvador Holguín and his large family survived the Pueblo Indian uprising of August 1680 as part of the mass exodus of residents who fled to El Paso del Norte for safety. In 1683, he led an expedition as far north as the Estancia de Las Barrancas, north of the Pueblo of Socorro, to determine the intentions of the Pueblo Indians. No agreement of peace was achieved at that time.

In 1692 and 1693, Gov. Diego de Vargas Zapata y Luján managed to negotiate peace with several Pueblo Indian leaders. Among the soldiers that accompanied Vargas Zapata y Luján was Capt. Juan Holguín, a son of Salvador Holguín who settled in the Villa de Santa Fe, bringing the Holguín family back to the community that its forebears helped establish. Other members of the Holguín family remained in the area of El Paso del Norte.

Descendants of the Olguin family continue to reside in Santa Fe to this day, while other branches of the family spread across New Mexico, into Colorado and to other states.

The next family to be featured in this series will be the Griego-Bernal family. 🌿



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